Journal of the Washington County Historical Society

Flash Back

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FLASHBACK

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the Washington County Historical Society

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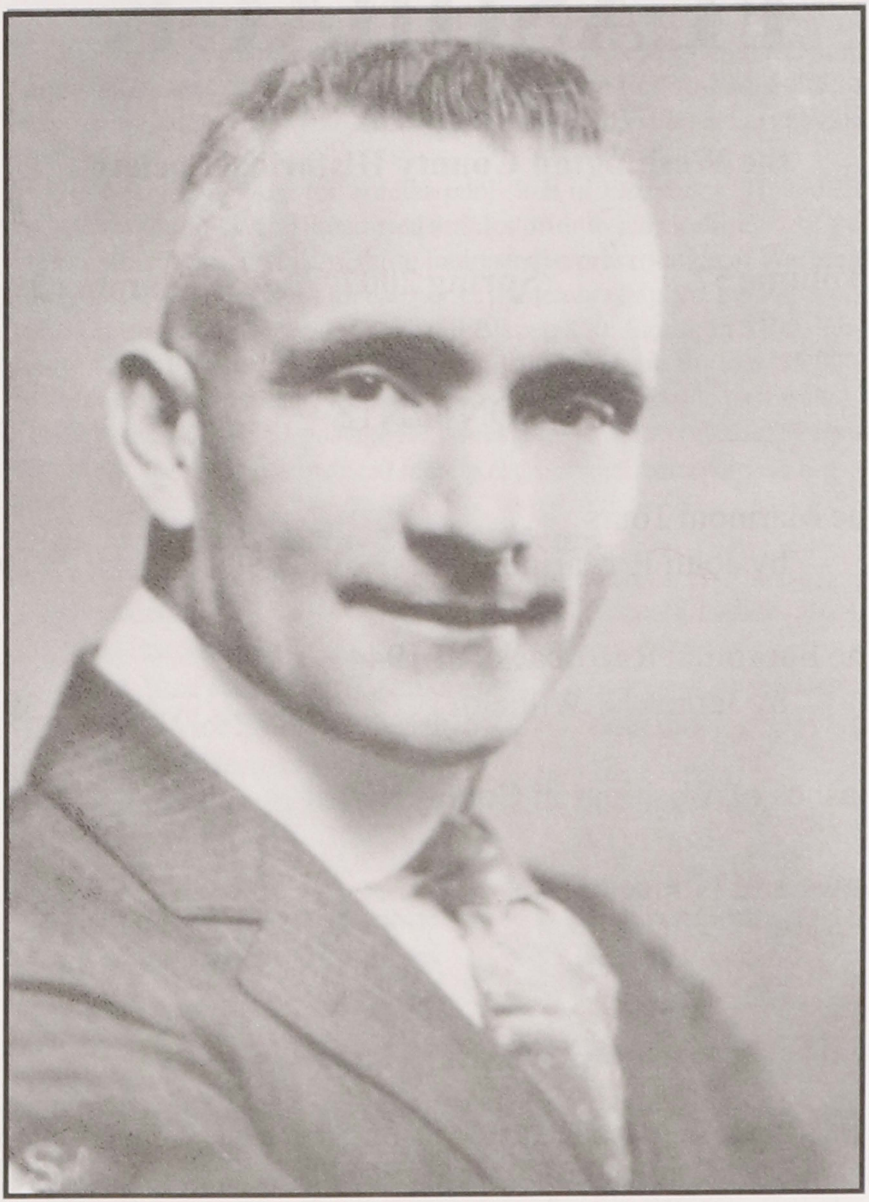
Cover: Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni, right, and her cousin, Ninetta Emanuelli, enjoy the sights on a gondola ride in Venice, 1937. *(Courtesy of John P. Marinoni)*



Antonio Marinoni

Photo courtesy John P. Marinoni

THE MARINONI TOURS

John P. Marinoni*

The great war was finally over. The Country was entering the roaring 1920s, and it was again the age of the "Grand Tours," when a young person's education was not complete without spending a summer abroad. My grandfather, Professor A. Marinoni, of Fayetteville, had been with the University of Arkansas since 1905, teaching languages and serving as Head of the Romance Languages Department. During World War I, the educational system in many parts of Europe had ceased to exist. Toward the end of the war, Professor Marinoni was asked to assist in the reconstruction of his native country, Italy. The University of Arkansas granted Professor Marinoni a leave of absence, and he returned to Italy to help reestablish the educational system in Northern Italy and parts of France. This involved several trips abroad lasting many months at a time. During one of these assignments, the rest of his family living in Fayetteville joined him in Italy for eight months. The family stayed in Bologna, which was where my grandmother, Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni, was born and still had many relatives there. In 1921, in appreciation for his work there, Professor Marinoni was decorated and made an "Official of the Order of the Crown of Italy" by king Victorio Emanuelle III.

Upon returning to Fayetteville that Fall, he resumed his position with the University. Soon afterwards, my grandfather and former UofA Professor, W. M. Briscoe started organizing a tour of Europe which was to take place the following summer. According to the flyer for the 1922 tour, Professor Briscoe was the Head of the Department of French at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

This flyer, which has been preserved in the Marinoni family archives, describes a tour of England, France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. It also lists the Passion Play at Oberammergou, which was to

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*John P. Marinoni is the grandson of Antonio and Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni. He lives in Fayetteville.

be given for the first time since 1910. A selling point in Professor Briscoe's flyer was seeing the famous battlefields and it commented that if you do not see the battlefields soon, you will not have the opportunity of seeing them except in the restored state. The cost of the trip with transportation from New York was $775. It was scheduled for 64 days, not counting the time to get to and from New York by train or any extra time one might want to spend sight-seeing before or after.

It is rather humorous to think you could get that much of a trip for $775 with first class accommodations all the way. Today, one night in any of the first class hotels that were scheduled could cost about that much. A transatlantic crossing on the Queen Mary 2 from New York to South Hampton today in a room with a balcony is in the range of $2,000 each way. An educated guess would be that a man and his wife could probably expect to spend the equivalent around $40,000 to $50,000 in today's money for the trip including tips, souvenirs, etc. Also, they would be gone and almost completely out of touch for over two months. The later tours went as long as 80 days— meaning a person would be gone the whole Summer. It is almost unheard of for people to take trips like that now no matter how wealthy they are.

A newspaper clipping in the family scrapbook concerning this tour says "At least a hundred have made reservations," and it lists 28 people from all over Arkansas as having already made reservations. Of the University of Arkansas participants, the article lists Dr. Charles Richardson, H. H. Strauss, Alfred E. Lussky, and LeRoy Berard. The brochure for the tour includes the following endorsements from two of these prominent University professors:

Fayetteville, Ark.,
January 5, 1922

To Whom It May Concern:

"For several years, I have been wanting to spend a summer in Europe, and have been trying to persuade Professor Marinoni to conduct a party on such a trip. When I heard that he had decided to direct a tour next Summer, I at once made up my mind to go on the trip. I consider anyone fortunate indeed who has the privilege of seeing Europe and especially Italy under his scholarly and sym-

pathetic directorship."

Signed,
HARRY STRAUSS, Head
Dept. of Latin and Greek

Fayetteville, Ark.
January 10, 1922

Dear Professor Briscoe:
"A chance to see Italy in particular as well as Europe in the company of Professor Marinoni is an opportunity that does not present itself often. As soon as I heard that he was to conduct a party next Summer, I resolved to go. Enclosed find a check for $60 which is the amount of the membership fee I believe."

Very truly yours,
Alfred E. Lussky, Head
Dept. of German,
University of Arkansas

The brochure adds the following comments as to Professor Marinoni's qualifications for leading this tour:

"In securing the services of Professor Marinoni, Head of the Department of Romance Languages, University of Arkansas, as conductor of the party, we are sure that we have secured the ideally qualified man for the undertaking. Being a native of Italy where he has spent much of his life, he is especially well prepared to pilot our group successfully through the abundant treasures of that wonderful country. He studied the classical and romance languages at the University of Padua and later at Yale University. Following the late war, he served as General Educational Director of the Y.M.C.A. in Italy and was the recipient of a decoration by the King of Italy. He has been for years in close personal touch with scholars and men of influence of that country and is known as an au-

> thor and scholar both here and abroad. He is a tireless worker in the promotion of closer intellectual relations between his adopted country and that of his birth. In addition to his own attainments, which he will put entirely at the disposal of our guests, he has been able to enlist the co-operation of distinguished Italians whose scholarship will be a source of great profit to members of our party."

Several references are listed, including: H. K. Wade, Cashier, McIlroy Bank, Fayetteville, Ark. and A. S. Goodwin, Cashier, Security Bank, Hot Springs, Ark.

It is hard to imagine how much larger the world must have seemed back then, the transatlantic crossing alone was shown in the brochure was taking ten days not counting several days on the train getting to the departure city. The only way to travel was by train because few streets or highways were paved. To give you some idea, the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* featured an article on September 25, 1922, about how they hoped that College Avenue would someday be paved! Presumably, no other street in Fayetteville was paved if College Avenue was not.

After this first tour, Professor Marinoni started conducting his own tours every year until World War II except for a few years during the Great Depression. The 1923 tour was expanded to 71 days starting in Montreal, Canada and added the feature of sailing the beautiful Saint Lawrence River and a visit to the quaint old city of Quebec on the way back. The cost was $885 per person. Professors Lussky and Richardson contributed testimonials for the flyer as to the previous year's tour and wrote that they were planning to go again on this tour. For those seeking further information, the address was simply, Prof. A. Marinoni, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Ark. Later brochures simply said "for further particulars, write to A. Marinoni, Fayetteville, Arkansas". Wouldn't the post office love that today? No phone numbers were ever listed in the brochures either.

Just before the 1924 trip, on April 25th, a major fire occurred in the area that is now West Lafayette in Fayetteville and the fire soon spread to the Marinoni house burning it to the ground. Being close to the university, many willing students and neighbors frantically joined in the wild melee to save what they could while the house next door was going up in flames.

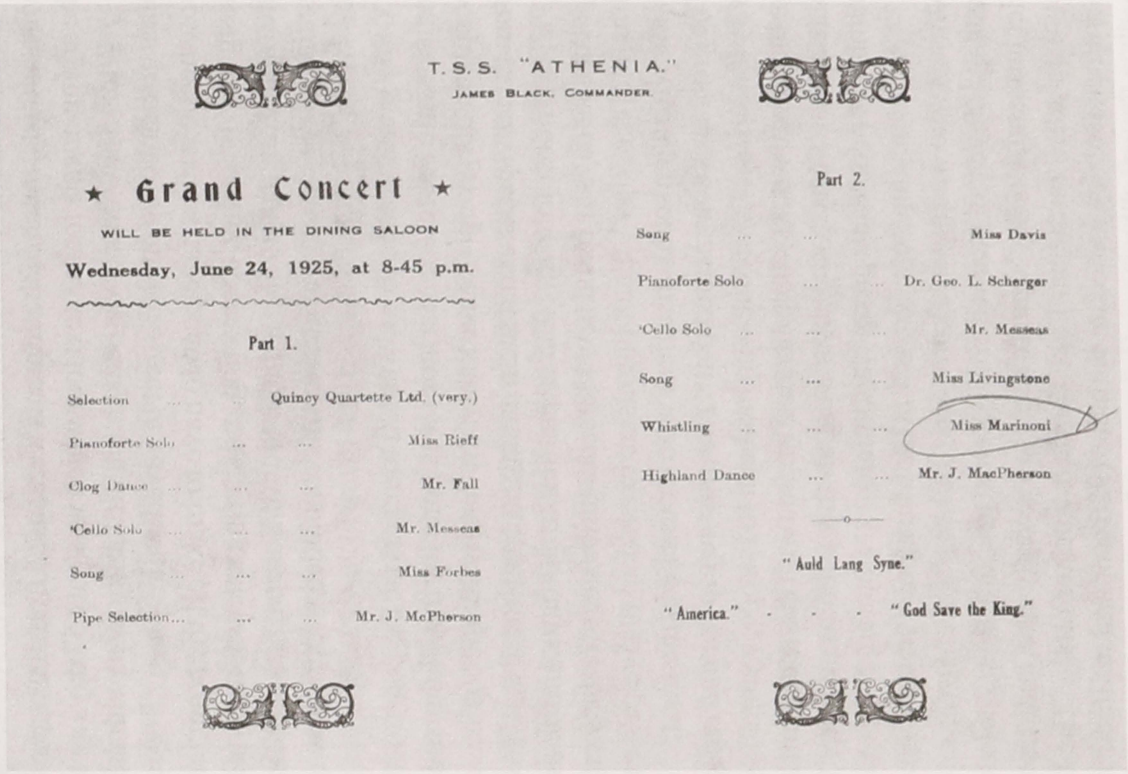
The nearest fire hydrant was several hundred yards away, and according to my grandmother, when the fire department finally got their hoses hooked up, the hoses were so old and cracked, that they would not hold water pressure. Not a drop of water hit the house and once it started to burn, it was gone within minutes. My father who was only eight at the time, witnessed the horrific event from the stone wall on Arkansas Avenue. Miraculously, much of the contents were saved from the house including the arrangements for the next tour which was only 57 days away.

While a new house was being built, the family lived with the Catholic nuns in their house on Hill Street in Fayetteville. One can only imagine how hectic it must have been to have to make all the arrangements for designing, financing, contracting and starting a new house while making the final arrangements for a major tour of Europe, and at the same time getting all the classes and final exams concluded within those remaining few weeks.

My grandmother, Rosa, was left to supervise the construction of the house while Professor Marinoni was gone for the 78 day tour with 26 people in his group. Remarkably, the family scrapbook has an article from the newspaper about them having an open house that November.

The fourth tour in 1925 expanded to 80 days and featured "25 spectacular days in brand new Mercedes limousines for the scenic portion thru [sic] the Alps". Each limousine carried up to five passengers and came with a personal chauffeur who would be at the guests' disposal. The brochures commented that ***"The only way to see and enjoy Europe is by limousine."*** Anyone who has been to Europe, trying to get around on their own, would whole-heartedly agree with this statement and find it humorous. Forty two guests went on this 1925 tour. After 1925, the number of people in a group was limited.

An interesting note here is that the Marinoni's 16 year old daughter, Maria, (who was always known as "Bobsey"), went over on the 1925 tour and stayed all year with her paternal grandmother, Paola Marinoni. Her husband, Bobsey's grandfather, had recently died, and she was living on their small farm near Lake Garda in northern Italy. The following Summer, Bobsey joined up with the 1926 tour and returned with them back to Fayetteville. Seventy five years later, when she was in a nursing home, she would reminisce fondly about her year there with her grandmother and with almost a tear in her eye, she would talk about it as



T.S.S. "ATHENIA."

JAMES BLACK, COMMANDER.

★ Grand Concert ★

WILL BE HELD IN THE DINING SALOON

Wednesday, June 24, 1925, at 8-45 p.m.

Part 1.

Selection	Quincy Quartette Ltd. (very.)
Pianoforte Solo	Miss Rieff
Clog Dance	Mr. Fall
'Cello Solo	Mr. Messeas
Song	Miss Forbes
Pipe Selection...	Mr. J. McPherson

Part 2.

Song	Miss Davis
Pianoforte Solo	Dr. Geo. L. Scherger
'Cello Solo	Mr. Messeas
Song	Miss Livingstone
Whistling	Miss Marinoni
Highland Dance	Mr. J. MacPherson

"Auld Lang Syne."

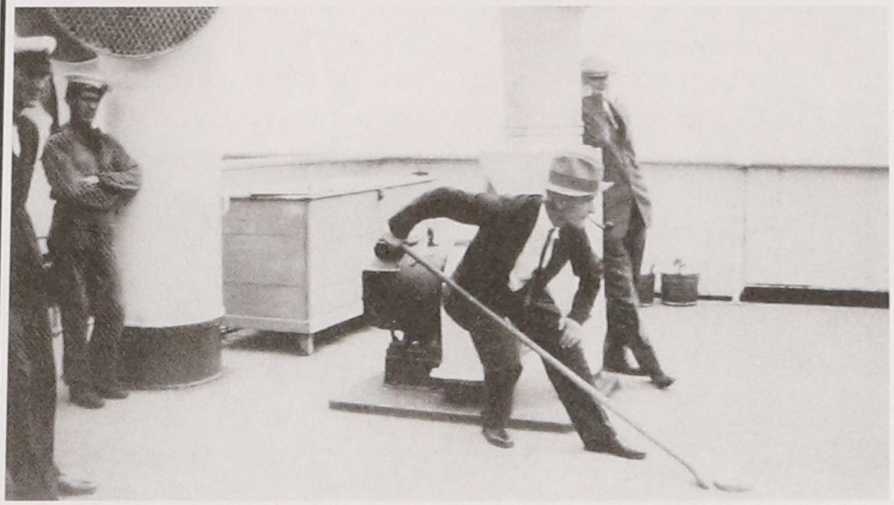
"America." - - - "God Save the King."

Program of the "Grand Concert," which featured the whistling of Bobsey Marinoni, 1925

Photo courtesy of the author

One of the Marinoni Tour Groups, ca. 1926. Professor Marinoni is seated in front.

Photo courtesy of the author



Antonio Marinoni Playing Shuffleboard
Photo courtesy of the author

the best year of her life.

The 1926 brochure has an interesting item. It says that special arrangements (at an additional expense) will be made for members of the party who may wish to reach Brussels from London via the air route. Presumably, this would have been on a dirigible such as the Zeppelin air ships in use at the time. This tour included even more use of the limousines. Nearly all the continental portion of the trip was going to be in the chauffeured limousines.

Most of the transatlantic crossings were on the newest Cunard ships. In 1927, the tour was scheduled to use the two year old Cunard ship, the *Ascania*, and it is interesting to note that the brochure offers a $190 credit each way for those wishing to make their own arrangements for the transatlantic transportation.

The brochure goes on to include the following testimonial from the previous year's group which was typical of the testimonials each year:

> "The members of the 1926 Tour conducted by Signor A. Marinoni wish to make an expression of their gratitude and appreciation to the unusual man who so carefully planned and carried out the tour. Not the smallest detail

have we had to annoy us. One most important item in the smoothness with which the tour has been conducted has been Signor Marinoni's accomplishments as linguist and his remarkable tact and diplomacy. We have traveled in England, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Spain; and Signor Marinoni speaks the language of all these countries with the fluency of a native. This has enabled us to cross those many borders with a minimum of annoyance and trouble. The limousine tour which began at Brussels and continued until we reached Paris has made possible for us many delightful experiences rarely granted to European travelers and was to each of us a revelation which will not be forgotten. The ride from Cologne to Strasbourg up the Rhine, the beauty of the Swiss and Italian Alps, the soul satisfying beauty of the Apennines, the charm of the Italian hill towns, the exquisite sea-scapes of the Italian Riviera, the rugged grandeur of the Spanish Pyrenees, are all memories that we will cherish forever."

Incidentally, my grandfather's nick name in the classroom and elsewhere was "Signor" except that within the family, he was always "Nana", or "Pappy".

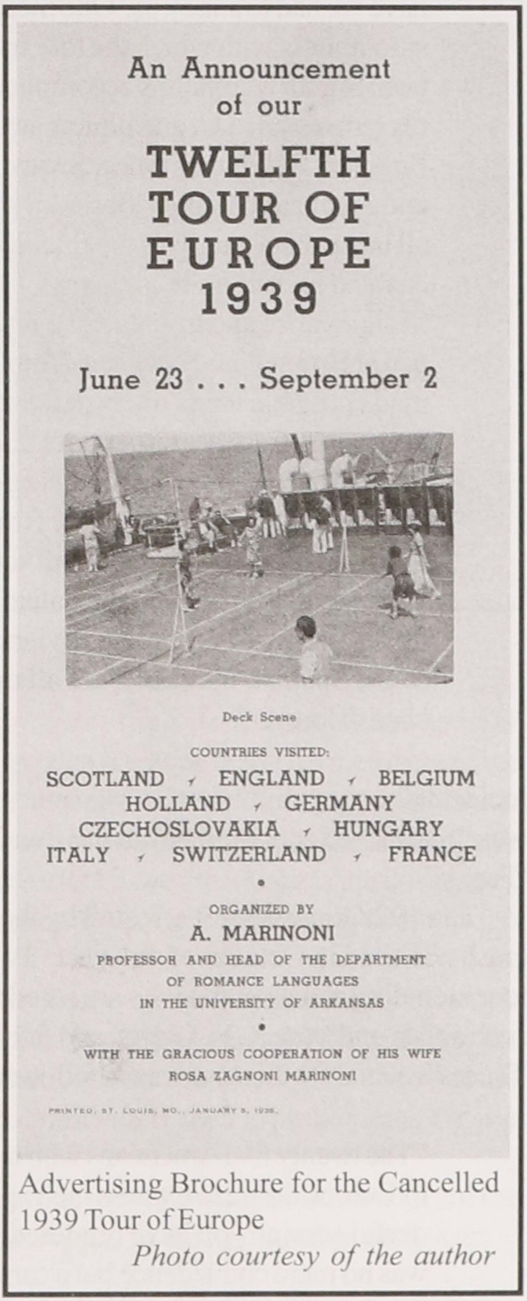
The 1928 tour was not affected by the stock market crash since the crash occurred in October of that year. Twenty-five guests went on this tour including some people who are listed as bringing their entire family such as Mr. and Mrs. R. N. Garrett and family from El Dorado, Arkansas. The testimonial for this tour was as follows:

"The twenty five Americans who made up your 1928 tour of Europe desire to express their appreciation of the wonderful service you have rendered. We recognize that it was no mere coincidence but a carefully thought out plan that brought our arrival in Genoa, the birth place of Columbus, on the Fourth of July, and we appreciate the fact that this same thoughtfulness followed us throughout our entire journey. It is our considered judgment that your

tour cannot be surpassed."

Although the country was well into the Great Depression by the summer of 1929, that year's tour also had 23 guests, including one family of four. The price of this tour was $1,450. To put this in perspective, in Robert Winn's book, *Railroads of Northwest Arkansas* , on page 23, it mentions a man retiring that year, and the total he had earned for his 42 years and 4 months of service was $1,040.75. Although $1,450 is not much in today's dollars, at the time, there were many people who had not made that much money in their entire lifetime.

There is not a record of who went on the ninth tour in 1930, but being in the midst of the depression, the attendance probably was declining.



Advertising Brochure for the Cancelled 1939 Tour of Europe

Photo courtesy of the author

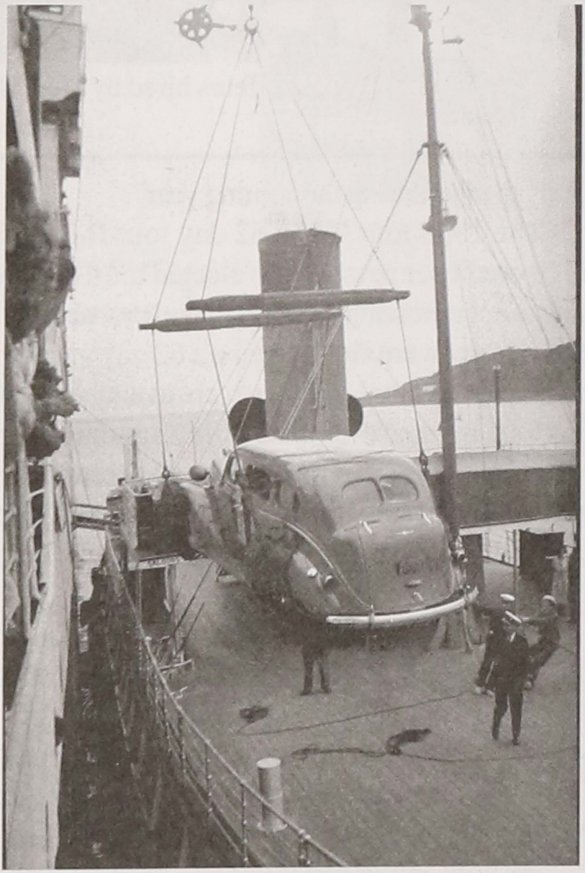
A tenth tour was planned for 1931, however, the 1937 tour was also advertised as the tenth tour, so obviously, the 1931 tour did not fill. No doubt, the Great Depression had come down hard on everyone.

The 1931 tour had been advertised as a 72 day tour with a cost of $1,450. By 1937, the depression was over but the effect of world wide

"deflation" was evident. Basically, that same tour was now priced at $775.

During this six year lull with no tours to plan and conduct every Summer, Professor Marinoni published several books including an autobiography written in Italian entitled *Come Ho "Fatto" L'America.* It includes a very interesting story about how he met my grandmother and contains many recollections of his early years in this country. It also features stories about Fayetteville and the University.

By 1937, the country may have been recovering from the depression, but the international picture was becoming unstable. The mood in Europe was very militaristic. Hitler had been the Chancellor of Germany since 1933, Italy had conquered Ethiopia in 1935, and in 1936, the Spanish Civil War had started and Hitler had reoccupied the Rhineland in violation of the treaty of Versailles. Both Hitler and Mussolini were in their heyday. The 1937 brochure nevertheless included this comment: "The depression which temporarily halted our yearly excursions to the Old Continent is over and while the future is on the lap of the gods, we venture the prediction that no major international complications are



Professor Luigi Passarelli's car is loaded onto the ship before beginning its trek across the Atlantic Ocean, 1938.

Photo courtesy of the author

Group of chauffeurs hired by the Marinoni Tours
Photo courtesy of the author

likely to arise during the coming year".

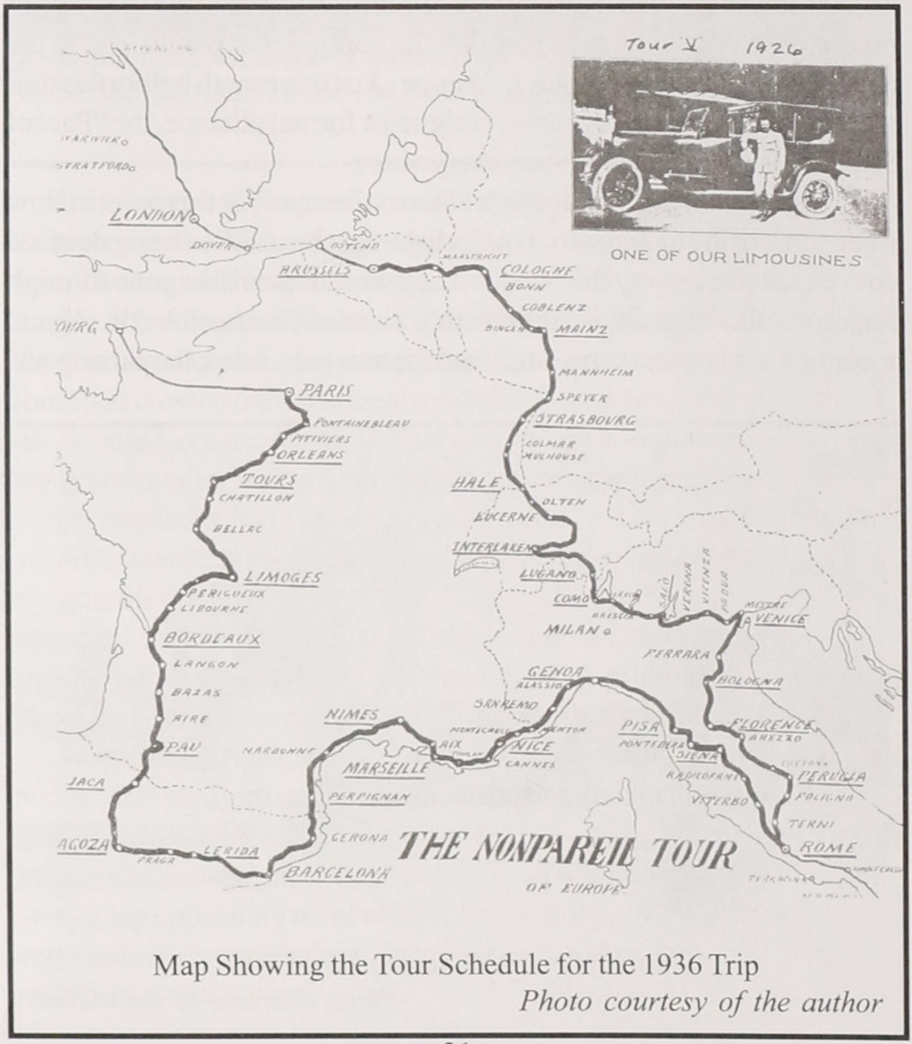
The 1938 tour was a 62 day tour for $846.50 and they offered a $100 credit per person who elected third class accommodations for the transatlantic crossings. Frugality was probably still on many people's minds even if they were about to take a 62 day vacation. The limousines were no longer included, but they were available for an additional charge. On this tour, my grandmother, Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni and my father, Paul Marinoni, were part of the group. From the pictures of that trip, they apparently left the tour at some point in order to spend more time with Rosa's relatives in Bologna and my grandfather's relatives in the Lake Garda area.

One of the travelers that year, Professor Luigi Passarelli of the University of Arkansas, brought his car over on the ship so as to have his own transportation. Imagine the complications of doing that! The family scrapbook has a picture of his big sedan being hoisted aboard the ship. His mother was still in Italy and he intended to leave the group to visit her. Mamma Mia!

By now, Hitler had invaded Czechoslovakia and things were going from bad to worse. My father told about being in Germany on this tour and seeing large groups of Hitler's "Brown Shirts" in the beer halls. He remembered them sitting on long benches loudly singing nationalistic songs

with their arms over each other's shoulders. He said they would sway back and forth together in time with their song. When that one was over, they would take a hearty swig or two from their steins, loudly laughing and cheering, then one of them would start a new song and here they would all go again. He said you could feel the tension in the air and you got the sense that all Hell was about to break loose. One of my father's cousins who he spent that summer with him in Italy did not survive the war. It was always a very sad memory for my father.

This cousin had a sailboat, and the photo albums have many pictures of them out sailing on Lake Garda. My father apparently caught the sailing bug and when he got back, he made a large sail and built the necessary



Map Showing the Tour Schedule for the 1936 Trip

Photo courtesy of the author

rigging to put it all on his canoe. Imagine that! He met my mother about this time, and we have pictures of them out at the newly completed Lake Wedington. They are standing next to the canoe with a big main sail on a 16 foot mast and a big jib out in front. Dagger boards were rigged on each side to prevent side slippage. One can only imagine how well that worked—or didn't work, but it must have been fun anyway.

What would have been the last tour in 1939 was to be a 72 day tour which included 10 countries. It had to be cancelled, according to my mother, because of the unstable situation in Europe. According to my internet research, in the previous November, the Nazis had burned 191 synagogues, destroyed thousands of Jewish owned shops and had arrested 20,000 Jews and confiscated their property. In January, 1939, Hitler predicted in one of his speeches that the coming war would lead to the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe. Just one month before this tour was to leave, Hitler and Mussolini signed a formal alliance, the "Pact of Steel" and military build-up was everywhere.

Imagine taking a tour through Hitler's Germany at this point in time when some of the members of your group might be at risk of being detained or even taken away by the Nazis. They would have also gone through Nazi controlled Austria and the recently invaded Czechoslovakia. Again, according to my internet research, had the tour proceeded, the participants

Paul Marinoni at Pompeii, Italy, 1938

Photo courtesy of the author

Paul Marinoni, the author's father, returning to the United States after one of the European Tours. The New York Skyline is in the background.
Photo courtesy of the author

would have been making their return voyage while there were 14 German U-Boats ahead of them patrolling the North Atlantic looking for ships to sink. They would have been at sea from August 26th until September 2nd. On the 3rd of September, the Cunard ship, the *Athenia*, en route to Montreal, was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine. The Marinoni Tours had crossed the Atlantic several times in the past on that ship and in fact, would have used it for the East-bound crossing for this 1939 tour. My grandmother was scheduled to be on that tour and my father and mother might also have been along.

After teaching languages at the University of Arkansas since 1905, my grandfather retired in June of 1944. Sadly, he only enjoyed his retirement for two months before dying of a heart attack. He was only my age, 65. I do not know if he would have continued with the tours after the War. I suspect that he might have if he had lived.

With all these tours, nothing ever went seriously wrong. No limousines ever got lost or wrecked, no one got deathly sick or injured and had to be left behind in a hospital, no one got detained or arrested at a border crossing for any reason, etc. I never even heard of any pick-pocket problems. Everything apparently went without any major hitches and the thing they were particularly proud of was that they never lost a single article of luggage in all those years.

R.M.S. "Alaunia." Saturday, June 19, 1937

GET TOGETHER DINNER

Honeydew Melon—Glace
Hors d'Œuvre—varies

Bortsch—Polonaise Cream of Celery

Poached Gaspe Salmon—Shrimp Sauce
Fried Sea Bass—Tartare

Veal Cutlets—Viennoise Vol-au-Vent—Chasseur

Ox Tongue—Broccoli

Creamed Cauliflower Succotash
Fried Egg Plant
Boiled and Fondante Potatoes

Roast Turkey—Cranberry Sauce

TO ORDER FROM THE GRILL

Minute Steak—Creole Mutton Chops—Macedoines

Salads—Princess Lettuce and Tomatoes
Dressings—French Tyrolian

Soufflee d'Amande Strawberry Jelly
Petits Fours
Ices—Vanilla and Raspberry with Wafers

Fresh Fruit Coffee

T

One Night's Menu during the 1937 Tour
Photo courtesy of the author

I am sure most of the travelers were a pleasure to be with, but even the most congenial people can start to get on each other's nerves after 70 or 80 days together. Little things can become annoying and frustrating to us when we travel in a foreign country. Subconsciously we expect things to be pretty much like they were back home although the whole reason for the trip was to see how things are in those other countries. The slightest thing like finding some ice tea can be nearly impossible. These Summer long tours basically took the travelers away from their usual Summer activities and the things they were used to having in the Summer. One story that survived was about an occasion where a very sumptuous buffet was served that included every sort of delicacy imaginable. One of the travelers was missing the corn-on-the-cob he always enjoyed in the Summer back home and he looked around at the display of culinary delights that the chef had proudly displayed and asked if they had any corn-on-the-cob. This did not compute at all with the chef. He was completely puzzled and probably offended, and said "corn?" "Corn is what we feed the horses and chickens, we would never think to feed it to our guests". Corn-on-the-cob was apparently unheard of in Europe back then, especially in first class restaurants. It may still be unheard of. I don't know if there is even a word for it in Italian. I don't remember ever seeing it even in the markets, but, then, it never occurred to me to ask for it.

I am sure my grandfather had no way of knowing who he was getting each time, or how congenial they might be, but based on the testimonials, he was very good at dealing with people. No doubt this is where the "tact" came in that some of the testimonials mention as being one of his fine qualities. I would think diplomacy and patience could have been mentioned also, but in general, he was definitely very well thought of from the various testimonials. Years later in the 80s and 90s, I was still running into people who had taken a language course with my grandfather in the Old Main 50 years earlier and they still had fond memories of him.

Before closing, I have to mention my grandmother, Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni and her contribution to all these tours. She often told of working tirelessly throughout the Fall, Winter and Spring helping to put these trips together. Without her encouragement, support and hard work, none of these tours could have been possible. In a time when the mail service was about the only way to communicate, it was no small accomplishment.

As mentioned before, some of the brochures and newspaper clippings

listed the people who had taken these tour along with some of their comments. From the information that has survived in the family scrap books, the following are the Arkansas travelers that we know of who went on these tours. There were also many other travelers from other states who are not listed, and we do not have a complete list of the travelers on the 1922, 1923, 1930, 1937 or 1938 tours.

Partial List of Travelers on the Marinoni Tours

Fayetteville:

Professor H. H. Strauss (with the UofA), 1922
Professor Alfred E. Lussky (with the UofA), 1922 and 1923
Dr. Charles Richardson, (with the UofA), 1922 and 1923
Le Roy Berard (with the UofA), 1922
Misses Helen and Emily Futrall, 1924
Miss Thelma Rieff, 1925
Mrs. Roberta Fulbright, 1926
Mrs. Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni, 1938
Mr. Paul A. Marinoni, 1938
Professor Luigi Passarelli (with the UofA)

Rogers:

Mrs. Edgar C., Baker, 1922

Fort Smith:

Mr. Allan Kennedy, 1927
Mr. W. R. Martin, 1927
Mrs. A. G. Williams and son, A. G. Williams, III, 1927
Mrs. Buckner Williams and daughter Blanche Williams, 1927
Mrs. C. B. Eads, 1927
Mrs. E. R. Weaver, 1927
Miss Elizabeth Luck, 1927
Miss Eleanor Albers, 1927

Altus:

Mrs. Sallie Barrow, 1922

Russellville:

Mr. Joe T. Reece and son, G. W. Reece, 1922
Miss Lillian Rankin, 1922
Mr. Bob Wilson, 1922

Conway:

Mrs. S. G. Smith, 1922

THE MARINONI TOURS

Little Rock:

Miss Hazel Murray, 1922
Miss Mamie Evans, 1922
Mrs. Frank Tiller, 1922
Mr. Stonewall Beauchamp, 1922
Mrs. E. B. Kinsworthy,1922, 1923, chaperone in 1924
Miss Robertelle Hamiter, 1924
Mr. Calvin Ledbetter, 1924
Mrs. J. T Beal, 1925
Mr. G. Dennison Cherry and Mrs. Lina D. Cherry, 1925
Mr. & Mrs. Albert D Cohn and daughters Miriam and Raida, 1925
Mrs. Lola J. Copeland, 1925
Miss Hilda Cornish, 1925
Miss Nita Davis, 1925
Mrs. Lula Beal Dibrell, 1922, 1925; Chaperone, 1927-1929
Mrs. C. H. Hinton, 1925
Miss Rosalea Newman, 1925
Miss Margaret Powell, 1925
Mrs. H. G. Leigh and daughter, Virginia, 1926
Dr. and Mrs. C. H. Brough, 1927
Misses Delrina and Jeannette Keith, 1927
Mrs. F. O. Rogers and daughter, Jane, 1928
Mrs. Louise S. Porter and sons, Lamar and Jim, 1928
Mrs. Theodore D. Ables, 1929
Miss Rita F. Sanders, 1929
Miss Clara Pfeiffer, 1929

Benton:

Mr. C. F. Elza, 1922
Mrs. Joe Hughes, 1922

El Dorado:

Mrs. E. O. Mahony, 1924
Mr. W. H. Rector, 1924
Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Rowland and their daughter, Mary, 1924
Mr. & Mrs. Walter M. Robertson, 1925
Miss G. E. Purifoy, 1927
Mr. & Mrs. R. N. Garrett and Family, 1928

Marianna:

Miss Eva Dupuy, 1922

Arkadelphia:

Miss Mabel Hurd, 1922

Brinkley:

Mr. Charles F. Greenlee, 1922

Mr. James Dunn, 1922

Batesville:

Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Fitzhugh and daughter, Mary, 1922

Newport:

Miss. B. B. Watson, 1926

Miss Margaret Van Dyke, 1926

Mrs. H. C. Sanders, 1926 (Chaperone)

Forrest City:

Judge and Mrs. S. H. Mann, 1924

DeQueen:

Miss Blanche Wingo, 1926

Texarkana:

Mrs. M. F. Mullins and daughter, Frances, 1924

Mr. Eugene Mullins, 1926

Mr. & Mrs. Paul G. Huckins, 1926

Mrs. Jno T. Logan and daughter, Jean, 1926

Mr. W. A. McCartney, Jr., 1926

Mrs. E. W. Frost and daughter Sarah, 1929

Misses Anne and Constance Williams, 1929

Hope:

Mrs. Hattie A West, 1926

Camden:

Misses Virginia and Caroline Gaughan, 1925

Miss Alice Lide, 1926

Mrs. T. J. Gaughan and daughter Ethel, 1927

Mrs. S. M. Heasley, 1928

Osceola:

Mr. H. C. Modreli, 1922

Warner:

Miss Edith Meek, 1922

Pine Bluff:

Miss Elizabeth Toney, 1929

THE FORGOTTEN RAZORBACKS OF 1944

James N. Wilhelm*

Before Eddie Sutton arrived in Fayetteville in 1974, it has been joked, there were only two athletic seasons in Arkansas: Football and Spring Football. There can be little doubt about the achievements of squads coached by Sutton and, in 1994, the Nolan Richardson team that won the NCAA Championship. The recent history of the University of Arkansas Basketball program is replete with victorious seasons; however, the inclination that before the 1970s the University had a program no one seemed to care about could not be more incorrect. In fact, prior to the 1970 season, the Razorbacks had won ten conference championships and had been invited to play in the National Championship Tournament four times. In fact, under the direction of Francis Schmidt, the Razorbacks in only their third season won the first of five Southwest Conference Championships in a row between the years 1926-30. Between 1926 and 1929, Schmidt's Hogs won 60 out of 65 games.[1] The identity crisis suffered by the Razorback basketball squad isn't limited to this event either. In an era of college athletics that encourages programs to flout its past accomplishments as an indication of current success, the Razorback programs have done just the opposite. In fact, very discreetly, the University of Arkansas in 2003 announced there was to be no celebration of its basketball national championship season of 1994. Personality conflicts and campus politics notwithstanding, the decision to ignore the achievement altogether, is practically unheard of in today's world where college athletics is big business.[2]

But one of the most dramatic stories of the Arkansas Basketball program isn't one of what happened on the court, but rather of what

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Coach Eugene Lambert

From the 1944 Razorback

happened on a dark, foggy highway in the Ozark Mountains in the early spring of 1944. The Razorback team of 1944 was one of those forgotten teams whose legitimate hopes for a national championship was dashed in a tragic, blinding second and the events that followed turned into one of the more fated, if not oft remembered, stories in Arkansas sports history.

The task of coaching the Razorback squad in 1944 fell on Eugene Lambert, a standout of the 1929 Hogs, then in his third year with the program. After a solid first two years, Coach Lambert had guided the Razorback squad to its second invitation to the NCAA tournament. Although it was only the second invitation to the tournament for the young program, the Razorbacks were no stranger to success. Under the direction of Glen Rose, himself a former Razorback star, the team of 1935-36 went through the season only losing three games and fell two games short from representing the United States in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.[3]

While Coach Lambert's early success was laudable, no one had predicted the season the Razorbacks of 1944 would have. As a matter of fact, the prospects of a Razorback team that only returned one starter, was labeled as "dreary". The team led the conference in scoring and although they only lost one game against Southwest Conference opponents, it took a last second, mid-court miracle by "Deno" Nichols to beat a tough Rice team 42-41 and a share of the conference crown.[4] "The Barn"[5] was proving to be a distinct advantage for the Arkansas squad, as they won all nine games at home that season. Although the team lost eight games during the season, all of them were on the road.

After a successful tour of the East Coast, during which the Arkansas five beat the powerhouse City College of New York before a crowd of 17,000 in Madison Square Garden, the team began conference play. After trading wins with the co-champion Rice Owls, the Razorbacks marched through the remainder of the conference season and found themselves, in March, tabbed as the favorite to win the national tournament. Their first game of the tournament was to be against the Tigers of Missouri in Kansas City, and then the unthinkable happened.

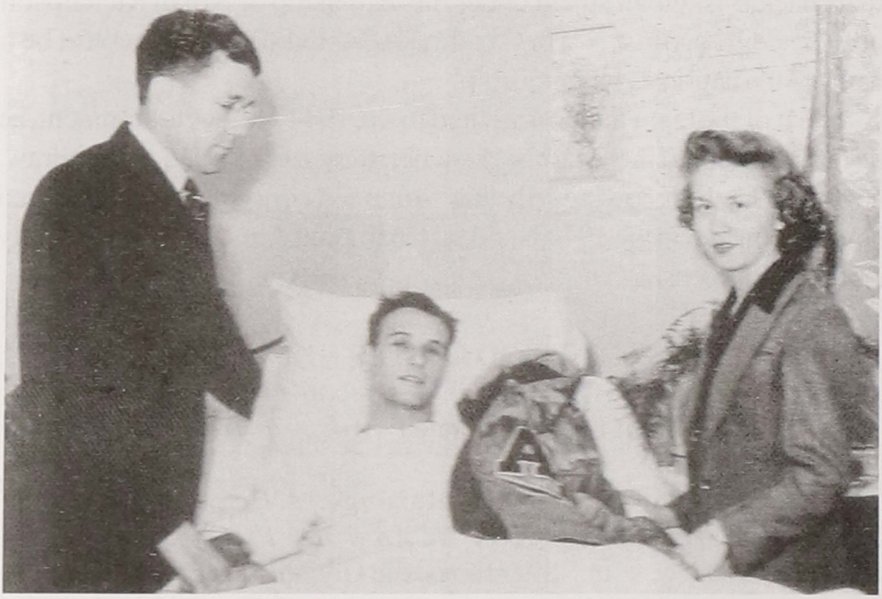
In an effort to fine tune his squad for the tournament, Coach Lambert had scheduled an exhibition game against the "Tankers" of Fort Chaffee in Fort Smith. The Tankers was a squad made up of GI's who were in training at the Fort and were thought of as a solid opponent to the Razorbacks. The game had been billed as the "Battle of Champions"

between the Southwest Conference Champion Razorbacks and the Fort Chaffee Tankers who had claimed the state A.A.U. title.[6]

The night started off badly for the Razorbacks, playing without star "Preacher" Bill Flynt, an ordained preacher who had returned to Ouachita Baptist to continue his theology studies. The Razorbacks lost to the Fort Chaffee team 58-52.[7] Then things got worse. On the return trip to Fayetteville, a car filled with five players and an assistant had a flat tire and were forced to stop on Highway 71 in the dark to change the flat. The driver of the car, University Physical Education Instructor Eugene Norris, was unable to pull the car off the road as the shoulder on the winding road was simply too narrow. The car contained the five starters of the squad: George Kok, Ben Jones, Mike Schumchyk, Deno Nichols, Red Wheeler and Norris. While a handful of the players helped Norris change the flat, George Kok stood behind the vehicle with a flashlight to warn cars coming up behind them of the situation. As the men were replacing the damaged tire in the car, another car came up behind them and although Kok waved his flashlight in warning, the car continued towards them. Frozen in the headlights, the two cars collided, smashing Nichols, Norris and Jones between them. The oncoming car, driven by the Washington County Coroner, was still drivable and the injured men were loaded in and rushed to Fayetteville while Kok and Wheeler remained with the wreck to wait for Coach Lambert and the remainder of the squad who arrived upon the scene an hour later.[8]

Shortly after arrival in Fayetteville, the young assistant Eugene Norris was pronounced dead as a result of his injuries. Deno Nichols, the mid-court miracle man, had his legs so severely injured, that his right leg

Ben Jones
From the 1944 Razorback



Coach Lambert presents Deno Nichols letteman's jacket after his car crash, as wife Virginia watches.

From the 1944 Razorback

was amputated. "Big" Ben Jones was taken to a Little Rock hospital, also with broken legs and a fracture in his back, and began his recovery there.[9] The following morning, as a result of the horrific accident, Coach Lambert was forced to withdraw the Razorbacks from the national tournament and in an obvious understatement declared, "What with our prevalent sorrow, we haven't much time to think about sports."[10] In a split second, the Razorback's season, full of promise for a national title, was over. The University was left to mourn the loss of Mr. Norris and pray for the recovery of Nichols and Jones.

Despite the tragedy of the 1944 season, the Razorbacks rebounded the next year winning seventeen games and returning to the NCAA tournament. Led by George Kok, the Razorbacks defeated Oregon 79-76 before eventually losing to the national champion Oklahoma A&M Aggies.[11] The Razorbacks would return to the national tournament twice before the arrival of Eddie Sutton, who would rebuild the once-storied program to prominence. As if fate would not allow the 1944 Razorbacks to be denied, fifty years later to the day, March 17, 1994, the Arkansas

Razorback Basketball squad under the leadership of Nolan Richardson took the court against North Carolina A&T to begin what would be a march to the national championship.

What of the team that was invited to the 1944 NCAA tournament, as the replacement to the Razorbacks when they were forced to withdraw, the Utes of Utah? Knowing only that "some sort of accident" had occurred they went on to win the 1944 National Championship. Their first and only national championship.

FOOTNOTES

[1] *1995-96 Arkansas Razorback Basketball Media Guide*. p. 62

[2] "Champions Will Go Uncelebrated". *Arkansas Traveler*. August 28, 2003. p. 4.

[3] Reed, William F. "A Barn Raising". *A Heavenly Season, a Celebration of Arkansas' 1994 NCAA Title, Presented by Sports Illustrated*. 1994. p. 9. In earlier times, the Olympic Team was chosen by winning a tournament whose field was comprised of existing teams. The Hogs lost to an all-star team from Hollywood 40-29.

[4] "Basketball". *1944 Razorback*, v. 47.

[5] "The Barn" refers to the gymnasium also known as "Schmitty's Barn", not to be confused with Barnhill Field House which was not built until 1956.

[6] "Basketball". *1944 Razorback*, v. 47.

[7] "'Parson' Flynt Lost To Porkers For NCAA Meet". *Arkansas Traveler*. March 17, 1944. p. 4.

[8] "Deno's Condition Satisfactory After Amputation of Right Leg; Big Ben Still Improving." *Arkansas Traveler*. March 19, 1944. p. 1.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Reed, William F. "A Barn Raising". *A Heavenly Season, a Celebration of Arkansas' 1994 NCAA Title, Presented by Sports Illustrated*. 1994. p. 10.

[11] *Ibid.*

WCHS Inaugarates W.J. Lemke Prize for Best Manuscript on County History

The Washington County Historical Society is now accepting entries for its First Annual W.J. Lemke Prize. Anyone interested in Washington County history, whether a professional or amateur historian, is encouraged to enter. Topics can be on any phase of Washington County's history or archeology, deal with an individual or institution connected with the county, and can address any time period.

The winning article will receive $300; Second prize receives $200. Both winners receive framed certificates. Winners will be recognized at a reception in early 2008.

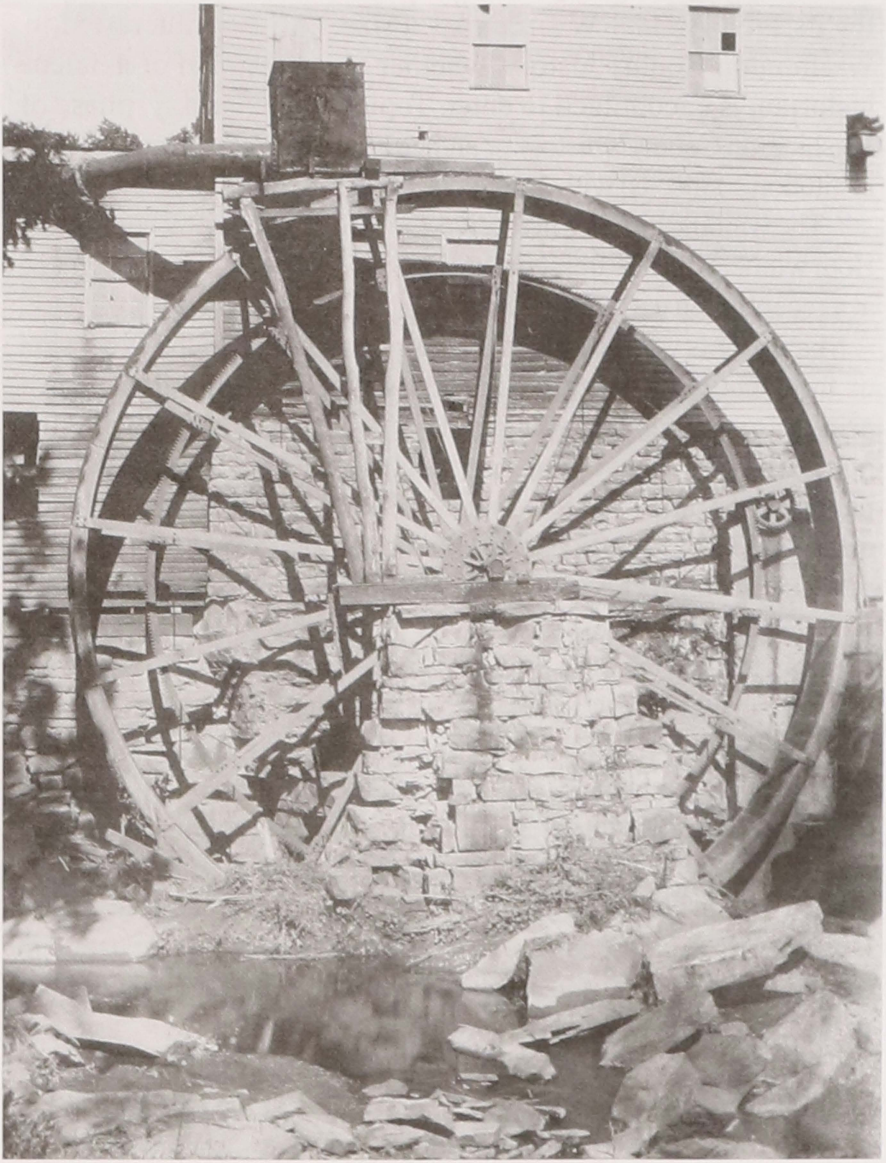
Manuscripts will be judged on their contribution to the expansion of the county's history; the originality of the subject; and, the use of primary and secondary sources. The manuscripts must be original material, and not have been previously published; no more than 40 pages, typed, and doubled-spaced. Footnotes should be included on separate, double-spaced pages, although they do not count toward the 40-page limit. The title page should contain the heading "W.J. LEMKE PRIZE," the full title of the manuscript, the author's name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address.

Entries become the property of the Washington County Historical Society and will not be returned to the author. All papers will be considered for publication in the *Flashback.* Copies of all entries in the Lemke Prize will be deposited with the Special Collections Department at the University of Arkansas Libraries. Entries may be mailed to Tim Nutt, Washington County Historical Society, 118 E. Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701, or emailed to timn@uark.edu by January 15, 2008. If the entries are emailed, they should be either in the PDF or Microsoft Word format.

Walter J. Lemke was a founding member of the Washington County Historical Society and the first editor of the *Flashback.* He also established the journalism department at the University of Arkansas in 1928, serving as its chairman from its inception to 1959.

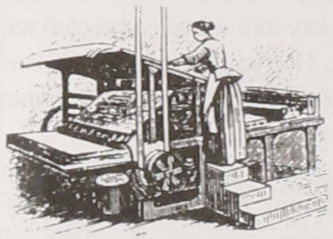
For additional information on the W.J. Lemke Prize, please contact Tim Nutt at the above address or at 575-8443 or timn@uark.edu

Flashes of Washington County's Past



Water Wheel at the Cane Hill Mill

Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History/ Washington County Historical Society Collection (P-224A)



News and Notices

AWHI Announces Call for the 2008 Pryor Award Submissions

The Arkansas Women's History Institute invites submissions for its annual Susie Pryor Award competition. The award is named in honor of Susie Hampton Newton Pryor, a mother, community leader, local history, and writer from Camden.

Founded in 1983, the Arkansas Women's History Institute is dedicated to encouraging the study of Arkansas women's history, and to promoting public awareness of the contributions women have made in the development of the state.

The Pryor Award offers a $1,000 prize for the best unpublished essay on topics in Arkansas women's history. Manuscripts are judged on their contributions to the knowledge of women in Arkansas' history, the use of primary and secondary materials, and analytical and stylistic excellence. The winning paper may be published.

Deadline for submissions is February 8, 2008. The winner will be announced at the annual conference of the Arkansas Historical Association in Eureka Springs, March 27-29, 2008.

For guidelines, or for more information about the Susie Pryor Award, please contact: Ethel C. Simpson, Chair, AWHI Susie Pryor Awards Committee, 409 North Oliver Avenue, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701. Simpson may also be contacted by phone at (479) 442-2929 or email via esimpson@uark.edu.

UA Special Collections Celebrates 40 Years

The Special Collections Department at the University of Arkansas Libraries is celebrating the 40th anniversary of its establishment.

Created in 1967 to encourage research and writing in the history and culture of Arkansas and surrounding region. The mission of the Special Collections Department is to acquire, preserve, and provide access to historical manuscripts, archives, maps, photographs, and published materials to support scholarly investigation of the state, its customs and people, and its cultural, physical, and political climate.

The Department has acquired a number of high-profile manuscript

collections throughout its 40-year history, including the papers of Sen. J.W. Fulbright and Governors and Senators David Pryor and Dale Bumpers. The Special Collections Department also holds the manuscript collections of the Washington County Historical Society, as well as over 900 additional collections documenting the history Arkansas.

For more information about the Department, please contact them at 575-5577.

Arkansas Historical Association Calls for Competition Submissions

The Arkansas Historical Association announces the Violet B. Gingles and Lucille Westbrook Local History competitions for 2008.

The Westbrook Local History Award, which consists of $1000 and a framed certificate is presented for the best submitted manuscript article on a local Arkansas topic.The article must deal with some phase of a neighborhood, city, county, or regional history or some person associated with local Arkansas history. Edited documents and memoirs will be considered for this award. Entries must not have been submitted elsewhere or published previously.

The Gingles award of $500 and a framed certificate is presented to the person who writes the best manuscript article on any Arkansas history topic. The article can deal with any phase of the history of the state or with any individual connected with its past. Entries must not have been submitted elsewhere or published previously.

Anyone, whether amateur or professional, is eligible to submit a mansucript. A panel of judges will determine the placement of entries in either the Westbrook or Gingles category. An entry will not be considered for both prizes, and the Association reserves the right not to award one or both of the prizes.

Manuscripts should be no longer than thirty-five pages and must be documented. Text, including quotations and footnotes, should be double-spaced. Footnotes should be numbered consecutively and appear in a separate section at the end of the text. Since manuscripts are evaluated anonymously, only the full title of the article should appear at the top of the first page of the manuscript. Please include the title, author's name complete address and phone numbers. Entries must be submitted in triplicate.

The deadline for entry is January 15, 2008and should be sent to the Association, Old Main 416, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

Editor's Note

Due to production delays, the printing schedule of the *Flashback* has been delayed. Every effort is being made to get back on schedule.

The editor apologizes for the delays.

PLANNED GIFTS

Making charitable gifts to the Washington County Historical Society will enable it to continue and expand its programs.

If you are making regular gifts to the Washington County Historical Society or would like to start, you may find it beneficial to set up or give:

1. A **charitable lead trust** that will pay income to WCHS for a set period.
2. A **charitable remainder trust** that will allow you to transfer property to a trust set up for WCHS without paying capital gains tax on the sale of the property.
3. **Appreciated securities** at their current value and take an income tax deduction for the year up to 30% of adjusted gross income.
4. **Gifts from your retirement account** that could be an integral part of planning for those withdrawals.
5. **An irrevocable life insurance trust** that could own your life insurance, when it no longer serves its purpose, to make a charitable gift that could reduce the estate's tax bill.

There are a number of ways to enhance your retirement plans while still providing for your charitable interests and making gifts you never dreamed possible. Consult with your financial advisor on other ways you can make charitable donations. These planned gifts will provide added tax benefits for you and your heirs while helping to support the vital mission of the Washington County Historical Society for years to come.

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